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# Representative Gregory W. Porter

## Will you be able to vote?

Due to new state laws, you will be required to have a valid Indiana state picture ID to vote on Primary Election Day—May 2. Please visit my web-site, [www.in.gov/H96](http://www.in.gov/H96), to learn more about this law and how to obtain an identification card and rules concerning absentee voting.



Representative Gregory W. Porter

Indiana House of Representatives  
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Working for You



Porter Votes NO on Selling Toll Road



Helping Hoosier Families



Property Tax Relief

# 2006 Session Report



# Additional Property Tax RELIEF

At the start of the 2006 session of the Indiana General Assembly, property tax relief was identified as a priority by members of both parties. When the smoke cleared, we were able to provide some relief for homeowners.



Rep. Porter

This year, about 1.5 million homeowners will receive a one-time increase in the state homestead credit from 20 to 28 percent. This credit will provide around \$100 million in property tax relief in 2006.

In 2007, the state homestead deduction will increase from \$35,000 to \$45,000 for one year only. This relief will provide an additional \$127 million in relief for homeowners.

Starting in 2008, the state will gradually phase in a cap on property tax bills at two percent of a home's value. This cap would apply to all classes of property in Indiana, starting in 2010.

While this relief is welcome, it still does not make up for the massive increases in local property taxes that were passed on to home and business owners through the biennial state budget approved in 2005 by the Republicans leading our state's government. At the time, that budget increased the burden on local property taxpayers to the tune of an estimated \$850 million.

And that means you are still going to see your property taxes go up when you get your next tax bill. The time to have enacted true, lasting property tax relief was 2005, but nothing was done by those in charge.

## Major Moves Porter votes **NO** on selling Toll Road

More than anything else, the 2006 session of the Indiana General Assembly will be remembered for Major Moves, the governor's program to sell the Indiana Toll Road for \$3.8 billion to a foreign group for the next 75 years.

This proposal became law, despite public opposition at a level I have never seen before. In large numbers, the people of Indiana said they did not want a public asset built with their tax dollars handed over to a foreign corporation, which then will pocket all profits generated by the toll road for 75 years. I heard you and voted **AGAINST** the plan, but our concerns were not enough to change the minds of the majorities in control of the Indiana House and Senate.

Now that Major Moves has become law, what will happen in Indiana?

From now until 2081, when you travel the Indiana Toll Road, your tolls will be sent overseas.

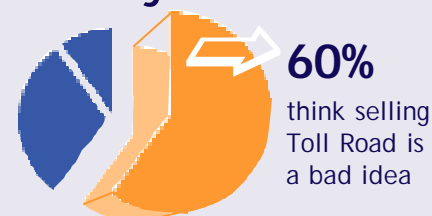
The governor says Indiana will begin work on around 200 road and bridge projects with the \$3.8 billion received from the foreign investors. I believe the sale doesn't provide enough funding to pay for all of the Major Moves projects promised by the governor.

An extension of Interstate 69 from Evansville to Indianapolis will be built, but the completion of that project will be delayed because Republican Marion County lawmakers demanded a new location at the northern end of the extension. No one can say when construction on the I-69 extension will be completed.

When that extension is built, it will be a toll road, likely owned and operated by a foreign company. Thanks to the demands of some Republican Marion County legislators, the I-69 extension will be a toll road from Evansville to Martinsville, but not from Martinsville to Indianapolis.

The implications of Major Moves will be felt in Indiana for years to come. If anything, more time was needed to fully analyze the impact of Major Moves. I fear we will be finding out more and more disturbing details about it as time goes on.

### Hoosiers Voice Opposition to Major Moves



Source: Indianapolis Star statewide poll, March 2006.



## Indiana tightens eminent domain law

Improving protection for homeowners

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that local governments can use the process of eminent domain to take private property, such as homes and businesses, in order to hand it over to a private developer.

Indiana lawmakers immediately began working on a plan to protect the property rights of Hoosiers. Months of bipartisan work has resulted in legislation that tightens Indiana's eminent domain laws and restricts the ability of most government units to seize private property and transfer it to private entities for development.

The new legislation sets strict standards for property acquisition through eminent domain, and limits its use to only truly blighted and decaying properties. This will prevent a developer from being able to have a local govern-

ment use eminent domain to seize your property simply because they think it might be a good spot for a strip mall.

It received unanimous support, but there are still potential problems that need to be addressed. Most troublesome is the fact that the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is exempt from complying with the new restrictions.



There are concerns that INDOT will use this exemption to seize property for some of the road privatization projects proposed by the governor, such as the Interstate 69 extension or other unannounced projects in other areas of the state.

## Improvements to Education

Education remains one of the most important topics we address at the Indiana General Assembly, and the 2006 session saw several improvements, as much for what we didn't pass as what we did.

During the 2006 session, there was an attempt to move the ISTEP test from the fall to the spring of the school year.

This move was opposed by Superintendent of Public Instruction Suellen Reed and others who felt the change was too costly and that it would not help in identifying students having problems and providing remediation for them. After much debate, it was decided to make ISTEP reforms the subject of a comprehensive study by the Indiana

Department of Education.

New legislation reinstates Indiana's Mentor Teacher Program, which provides professional support to veteran teachers who help in professional development of younger colleagues. Another bill offers high school dropouts the chance to earn their diplomas through the Fast Track program.

We also were able to stop efforts to expand public school vouchers and school choice programs, and I am very pleased that we were able to delay an effort to deregulate public education by eliminating hundreds of state laws on instruction and operation of our schools. Many of us feared this change would have caused funding to be eliminated for programs in such areas as early childhood intervention, summer school, vocational education and substance abuse prevention.

## New legislation

### HEALTH INITIATIVES

Indiana is moving forward with its improved health initiative, which encourages healthier eating habits among school children by requiring school vending machines to offer more "better choice" food items.

### HOME IMPROVEMENT FRAUD

The circumstances under which home improvement fraud can now be prosecuted have been expanded. The bill increases the penalties for home improvement fraud if the improvements were made on the property of a senior citizen or if more than two clauses of home improvement laws were violated.



Rep. Porter (center) discusses legislation on the House floor.